received in the third message further comprises the updating being initiated by an action by the first user at the first computing device.

14. A method for authoring a document at a first computing device, the method comprising:

at the first computing device, editing a first unit of data of the document, the first unit of data being edited by a first user;

at the first computing device, when the first unit of data is edited, providing a first annotation on the document indicating that the document is being edited by the first user, the first annotation being displayed on the document when the first user moves a cursor to the first unit of data, the first annotation comprising a name tag that indicates the name of the first user;

at the first computing device, when the first unit of data is edited, setting a first lock on the first unit of data, the first lock preventing the first unit of data from being edited by anyone other than the first user;

at the first computing device, sending a first message to a second computing device, the first message indicating that the first unit of data of the document is being edited, the first message also indicating that the first unit of data is locked by the first user;

at the first computing device, receiving a second message from the second computing device, the second message indicating a name of a second user that is editing a second unit of data;

at the first computing device, setting a second lock on the second unit of data, the second lock on the second unit of data preventing the second unit of data from being edited at the first computing device; and

at the first computing device, providing a second annotation on the document, the second annotation indicating that the second unit of data is being edited by the second user, the second annotation comprising a name tag that indicates the name of the second user.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising at the first computing device, receiving a third message from the second

computing device, the third message indicating that updates are available for the document.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising displaying a visual alert on the document at the first computing device when the third message is received from the second computing device.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the visual alert comprises a text box on the document at the first computing device.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the visual alert comprises the name tag in the second annotation changing colors.

19. The method of claim 15 further comprising at the first computing device, updating the second unit of data to incorporate changes to the second unit of data received in the third message.

20. A computer-readable storage medium comprising instructions that, when executed by a first computing device, cause the first computing device to:

edit a first unit of data of a document, the first unit of data being edited by a first user;

provide a first annotation on the document indicating that the document is being edited by the first user;

send a first message to a second computing device, the first message indicating that the first unit of data of the document is being edited;

receive a second message from the second computing device, the second message indicating a name of a second user that is editing a second unit of data;

set a first lock on the second unit of data, the first lock on the second unit of data preventing the second unit of data from being edited at the first computing device;

provide a second annotation on the document, the second annotation indicating that the second unit of data is being edited by the second user;

receive a third message from the second computing device, the third message indicating that updates are available for the document; and

update the second unit of data to incorporate changes to the second unit of data received in the third message.

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